

High Commissioner Exhorts Three Young Nigerian Winners Of The Queen's Young Leaders Award To Be Good Ambassadors.

Three young Nigerians are among the 2018 cohort of Queen's Young Leaders Award winners who took part in a special ceremony at Buckingham Palace, London, on the 26th of June, 2018. Each winner was presented with their Award by Her Majesty the Queen, who was joined at the ceremony by Their Royal Highnesses, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex.

The Queen's Young Leaders programme supports and recognizes young people, aged 18-29, who are transforming their own lives and the lives of those around them across the Commonwealth, despite the challenges they may have faced. The prestigious award was granted to 60 young people from around the Commonwealth in recognition of the incredible work they have done in their home nations.



His Excellency, the High Commissioner pictured with Hauwa Ojeifo(r) and Isaac Ezirim

On 27th June, two of the awardees, **Hauwa Ojeifo** (f) and **Isaac Ezirim** (Kennedy Ekezie- Joseph due to prior personal engagements could not visit the High Commission), paid a courtesy call on His Excellency, the High Commissioner, Justice George Adesola Oguntade, CFR, C.O.N. His Excellency exhorted the awardees to continue to work hard and endeavour to be good

Ambassadors. “By the dint of your hard work you have brought honour to yourselves and our country ... keep it up”. He said.

A brief summary of the incredible achievements of the proud awardees is provided below:

Hauwa Ojeifo

Hauwa is dedicated to overcoming the stigma around mental health in Nigeria. She runs a women’s support group called She Writes Women, which focuses on mental health support and outreach among some of the most vulnerable people in the community. Through this organization, she set up the country’s first 24-hour mental health helpline, which has so far assisted more than 200 women to gain the support they need. Hauwa also operates ‘Safe Places’ – free monthly support groups for women, which include therapy and help from counsellors, coaches and physicians and carries out ‘Hope Visits’ to people in psychiatric hospitals who have not had visitors for a long time.

Kennedy Ekezie-Joseph

Kennedy works to promote women’s rights in Nigeria. He is the founder of the Calabar Youth Council for Women’s Rights (CYCWR), which supports the rights of women in the areas of female genital mutilation (FGM), domestic abuse, forced child marriage and access to education for girls. The CYCWR works with rural community members, to educate them on the dangers of gender-based violence. CYCWR has worked with The Girl Generation to end the practice of FGM in over 200 communities, and has worked with the government to run safe houses for victims of FGM. Kennedy is currently working with the government to introduce anti-FGM laws in his state, and anti-FGM and gender-based violence education into the curriculum of all secondary school.

Isaac Ezirim

Isaac is a computer programmer who teaches coding to teenagers in low-income areas. He is the founder of Teens Can Code, which is currently training 200 teenagers in Lagos about computer coding and how to build web and mobile applications. Isaac also created a Teens Hub, where teenagers from the community can go to learn about coding and create applications together. It hosts monthly demonstration days for teenagers to help them build their entrepreneurial skills. In addition, Isaac organises a Teens Code Conference for students aged 11-18 to provide an opportunity for people in rural areas to learn how to code. Through the conference and career day events, Isaac and his team have reached more than 3,500 teenagers.